

Bayside Wrestling Championships

KI Bucs Trend

Become first North Bayside team to win conference title

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By WILLIAM HAUFE Sports Editor

CAMBRIDGE — In a season of firsts, Kent Island High's wrestling team figured, why stop?

The Buccaneers placed eight in the finals, watched Stevan Smith, Zach Smith, Colton Smith and John Robert win their respective weight classes, and became the first North school ever to win the Bayside Conference championship tournament since its inception in 2005, running away with the team title Saturday night by a whopping 98-point margin over Stephen Decatur at Cambridge-South Dorchester High.

"I can't believe it was that wide," Kent Island coach Rusty Smith said of his team's margin of victory. "We wrestled real well. A lot of our swing guys wrestled back to third, fourth and fifth place, and that got us extra matches and helped accumulate team points."

Kent Island's lower weights have impressed all season, and Justin Thomas (106) and Justin Messersmith (120) joined the Smiths and Robert in the finals. Also reaching the finals were Dmitry Callas, who lost 1-0 to Stephen Decatur's Alex Schiffer at 145 pounds, and Cody Foxwell, who lost by technical fall to Wicomico's Alex Pullen at 182.

"We were hoping to get six guys in the finals, so that was an added bonus," Rusty Smith said of Callas and Foxwell.

Contributing to Kent Island's 294-point final total were consolation winners Mason Miranda (170) and Ricky Maldonado (285), fourth-place finishers Billy McCowen (152) and Mike Hooks (160), and fifth-place finisher Kelsey Haigler (195).

Padding that final total were their four champions.

After Thomas lost by fall in the 106 final, Stevan Smith crafted a 16-4 technical fall over Parkside's Jason Fox. Parkside's Lamont Brickous earned a 11-1 major decision over Messersmith at 120 before the Bucs reeled off three straight victories.

Zach Smith (126) pulled out a 1-0 victory over Cambridge-SD's Javeion Turner. Colton Smith — who notched his 100th career victory in the semifinals — recorded a 2-0 decision over Snow Hill's Chris Gonzalez at 132.

Then came Robert's 2-1 victory over Mardela's Dillon Dorsey at 138 in which seemingly everyone — coaches, officials, scorekeepers — lost count of how many periods had actually been wrestled. It wasn't until Kent Island assistant Tommy Sitar heard a parent say Robert and Dorsey were actually wrestling a fourth period, that the match was stopped.

"I didn't realize we were going for seven minutes, almost eight," Robert said. "I had no idea. I just kept wrestling. That's where the conditioning comes in. And I thank my coaches and my team for always pushing me."

Coach Smith said the Bucs' close victories showed the difference between dual-meet and tournament wrestling.

"We were very cautious and conservative," Rusty Smith said. "We'd get ahead and we'd stay ahead. You can't give any points away. You can't cut kids loose. You fight for every point and retain any point."

Easton’s Ryan Anthony and Wyatt Griffith each won their respective weight classes. Anthony earned a 10-0 major decision over Queen Anne’s Eddie Hartle in the 170-pound final.

“Once I got on top and started riding him I knew I could take it the whole three periods on top,” Anthony said. “So I just tried to ride. I would get points where I could. (Assistant) Coach Steve (Culver) said, get creative with your points last week. So I was just trying to get creative out there on top, trying to turn him with everything I got.”

Griffith earned a 1-0 victory over Queen Anne’s Eddie Gillin during the regular season, and never looked in trouble in the rematch, scoring a first-period takedown before coupling an escape with a late takedown in the third for a 5-0 victory in the 220 final.

“The first match against him I got to feel him out so I was more prepared this time,” Griffith said. “I definitely felt more comfortable out there on the mat.”

Queen Anne’s Matt Olauson held a 2-1 second-period lead before pinning Wicomico’s Kenny Verceleyen in the 195-pound final. And North Caroline’s Brion Blades pushed his unbeaten record to 45-0, with a 5:40 pin of Stephen Decatur’s Ryan Kail in the 285 final.

“I was nervous,” said Blades, who trailed 3-2 before sticking Kail.

Stephen Decatur’s Andrew Borradaile posted an 11-8 decision over Kent County’s Justin Peacock in the 160 final.

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